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ASKED MENACE Gabby Hayes Tall Tale

OWDY, there, young folks. I see you are admiring my noble steed, Corker, He's some handsome hunk of horseflesh, isn't he? Now watch what happens when I say, "Kneel, Corker." See how he gets down on his knees so I can dismount? I tell you, there's not another cavuse like him in the whole west. Why. Corker can do everything but talk! And speaking of that, I recollect a few years

back when I happened to meet up with a horse that could talk! I see your eyes a-popping and I reckon you wouldn't even believe this story if it was told to you by anybody but Honest Gabby Hayes. Let's all sit ourselves on this here corral rail and I'll tell you all about this talking horse which I nicknamed Mr. Chatter,

One day, I was sitting on the porch of the Rawhide General Store, waiting for somebody to come along for me to talk to. It was one of those red hot, lazy summer days. There wasn't a soul stirring on Main Street and the only sound was the buzz of some big flies, trying to bore their way through the screen door to get at the sugar barrel.

I had just bought me a poke of apples in the store so I took one out of the bag and began to chomp on it. Imagine my surprise when somebody said, "Say, Buster, how about giving me a bite of that apple?"

I looked up and down the street and behind me and every which way and there wasn't a human being in sight. The voice spoke again, "Please, mister. I sure would admire to have s bite of apple. I haven't had anything to eat but dried up sage grass for nearly a week."

And 'twas then I noticed who was talking to me. It was this big roan, standing near the hitching rail. I was plumb astounded as he continued, "Don't think I'm just a begger, I'll pay you for the apple as soon as I get a job. And believe me, when I'm employed I work like a horse!" Well, sir, that seemed fair enough and he had an honest face for a roan. So I pulled a good size apple out of the poke and said "Here, friench I never like to see anybody go hungry, man or beast. Have an apple, Have

as many as you like. And as for paying me. don't worry about it." (Those apples were three for a penny and I figured it wouldn't hurt me even if he didn't

pay me back for a month.) After he had eaten enough to satisfy him, I remarked, "It's rather uncommon to meet up

with a horse that speaks English like you do." "Well, I do my best," he responded, modest-

ly. "Of course, sometimes when I get excited. I'm afraid I have just a trace of accent. There's Spanish blood in my veins," he explained.

For awhile we talked about the weather and the condition of the crops and what prices were being paid on the cattle market and all the same kind of things that a man and a horse are likely to talk about. Then an idea struck me like a bolt from the blue. I had a plan to unmask the Masked Menace!

You've heard of him, of course. He was wellnigh as notorious as Jesse James! He specialized in holding up stage coaches out on the lonely road through the badlands. None of the victims could ever identify him on account of the mask. Some folks suspected that he was probably a citizen of Rawhide, going around pretending to be a good, honest person. There was no way to make sure until I got my great idea.

"Hey, Mr. Chatter, come on down to the sheriff's office with me!" I said.

"You mean me?" asked the roan. "But I haven't committed any crime. I didn't steal

your apples!" "No. no," I said. "I think you and I can work together to stop a crime. But I want to holdu

I asked Mr. Chatter to wait outside while I went into the lawman's office. The sheriff was at his desk. "Slim," I said, "I think I have figured out a way to get the goods on this here Masked Menace."

"How, Gabby, how?" exclaimed Slim.
I responded, "Well, now, I was just talking

I responded, "Well, now, I was just talk to this horse out here and he says . . ."

Slim is pretty strong and he caught me by surprise. He picked me up bodily and haid me out on the couch alongside the wall. He said, "Gabby, you lie there real quiet like and you may recover. You've had a sunstroke. I'm going after the doctor right away!"

I was so flabbergasted I couldn't open my mouth and he hurried out the door. I got up and ran out a second later. I said to the roan, "Hey, Mr. Chatter, the sheriff thinks I've gone loco. You've got to get me away from here right saws."

right away."

"Sure, get on board!" he said. I mounted and
we went whisking away from there. I decided
that on account of the way Slim had acted, I,
would unmask the Masked Menace all by myself. That is, by myself with the help of Mr.
Chatter. I hadri hyaid any attention to where
we were going. We were well out on the plain
when we happened to encounter Smilling Smith.

the Friendly Horse-Trader. I nudged Mr. Chatter and said, "Keep mum. Let me do the talking."

Smiling Smith grinned and said, "Mighty fine-looking horse you're astride there, Gabby. Care to sell him?"

Care to sell him?"
"I dunno," I responded. "I only just got
acquainted with him and I'm trying him out."

"Well, bear me in mind," said Smiling Smith, smiling. "Remember, nobody but nobody gives you a better price than Smiling Smith."

He rode away and Mr. Chatter and I continued to the badlands. As I rode, I explained my scheme to the roan. I told him to hang around the stage road and sort of follow the stage. Then, when the Masked Menace pulled a holdup, Mr. Chatter could follow the Menace until he unmasked. "He'll never suspect a horse," I said. "Then you can go into court and be a surprise witness. There's a thousand dollar reward, and you and me will split it."

Mr. Chatter was all in favor of halping law and order so he agreed. He willed around, and order so he agreed a holding. When the Masked Menace staged a holding he followed him and saw him take off his himself. Then he hurried to tell me about it. In fact, he was in such a hurry that that's where he made his mistake! Instead of waiting to get to the bridge, he jumped in and swam across Deep Freeze River, which is made up entirely of melted snow from the mountains. When he got to me, the roan had such a terrible case of melted snow from the mountains. When he got to me, the roan had such a terrible case of largrights that he could only talk in a whisper. He whispered the name, "Smilling Smith."

as a witness, he had lost his voice entirely!

Well, sir, it looked like our whole court case was manshed to pieces, but Gabby Hayes, case was manshed to pieces, but Gabby Hayes, is not one to take defeat easily. I figured it is not look to take defeat easily. I figured it would be dangerous to prove, but I'd do it it would be dangerous to prove, but I'd do it would be dangerous to prove, but I'd do it was anyway. I followed that hombre out of town and the next time he tried to holdup the stage, anyway. I loud a pun at his back. "You are all finished. Mr. Masked Menace," I said. "It's the calaboose for you!"

GOT the thousand dollar reward, but being a fair man. I split it fifty-fifty with Mr. Chatter, after taking out what he owed me for the apples. He took his abare and bought steamboat passage to Spain, asying he had always wanted to get a look at the home of his ancestors. I got a letter from him just last week and he's not too happy over there—seems. Hike he can't find anybody that speake English!

THE END

Read the riotous TALL TALES in future issues of GABBY HAYES WESTERN.























GABBY HAYES WESTERN

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lim's head, places his hands on the victim's bock, with thumbs just touching and the heels of the hands just below a line running between the victim's armpits.

The rescuer rocks forward slowly, elbows stroight, until his orms are almost vertical —exerting steady pressure upon the back.

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Debows, which are roised until re-

sistonce is felt of the victim's shoulders then, the orms ore dropped. This completes o full cycle, which is repeated 12 times o minute.

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